

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE 1A

WASHINGTON TIMES
24 September 1985

British blush red, like spies, as defector tells 100 names

By Arnaud de Borchgrave
THE WASHINGTON TIMES FOREIGN SERVICE

LONDON — More than 100 Britons and other foreigners who have been working for the Soviet Union in Britain have been compromised by the defection of KGB spymaster Oleg Gordievski, ranking intelligence sources say.

Mr. Gordievski, the former KGB station chief in London, had actually been secretly working for the West since he defected in Denmark in 1972.

The names of the Britons who had been witting or unwitting agents for the Soviet intelligence agency are being kept secret by the British government, trying to minimize its acute embarrassment. It was learned the compromised agents include politicians — not just from the left — and trade unionists as well as members of the peace movement.

The British government has expelled 31 Soviet diplomats, journalists and trade representatives on the grounds that they were using their official covers for their work as intelligence operatives. It is standard practice among KGB and GRU (Soviet military intelligence) agents to cultivate from one to five local recruits in the countries in which they are based.

Mr. Gordievski knew the identities or identifying particulars of over 100 assets, as the recruits are called, in Britain.

Some of these are high-ranking men and women of all political parties. A number of them were turned into double agents by MI5 — the British FBI — after Mr. Gordievski turned their names over to British intelligence.

But political and economic factors are also thought to be inhibiting public disclosures, arrests and prosecutions. In fact, a number of the agents have been advised to leave Britain — and never come back.

Moreover, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher is said to be anxious not to rock the boat prior to the U.S.-U.S.S.R. summit in Geneva Nov. 19. She is known to be keenly aware that Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev's tit-for-tat response to the expulsions of Soviet intelligence agents from

Britain has dealt a serious blow to British representation in Moscow.

Sir Geoffrey Howe, the foreign secretary, met his Soviet counterpart, Eduard Shavardnadze, in New York yesterday to begin mending fences.

Britain has lost 23 diplomats in its Moscow embassy, eight of whom had wives working in the mission. The Soviets lost only 13 embassy staffers. The rest were identified as "journalists" or members of other Soviet offices. Moscow still maintains 203 diplomats and other officials in London; Britain maintains 62 such persons in Moscow.

In London, Mr. Gordievski was the KGB's No. 2 agent until he became head of the "residency" last December. As such, he would not have known about GRU networks run in London or the KGB's "Line KR operations." These include counterintelligence penetrations of MI6, the British CIA, and MI5, internal security and discipline of Soviet diplomatic, trade and media personnel, and the names of other Russians who might have been recruited by British intelligence.

But he knew chapter and verse on British citizens who had been recruited by the KGB in Britain.

Of the 31 KGB agents expelled from Britain after the defection was announced, three had close links to the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. Two of the three — Sergei Volovets and Yevgeny Safronov — actually put in appearances at CND meetings in different parts of Britain.

Though CND has denied it, the group is known by intelligence sources to have played a key role in the strategy of the World Peace Council (WPC), a Soviet-front organization created in 1949. WPC has spawned 137 national branches all over the world, including the U.S. Peace Council, founded in Washington in 1979, which, in turn, set up branches in all 50 states. WPC is headed by Romesh Chandra, a former high-ranking member of the Indian Communist Party. Many prominent members of the Communist parties in the United States, England and other Western countries hold positions on their national peace councils.

For the British, the economic stakes are not small. Mrs. Thatcher, intelligence sources in London say, is acutely aware of a huge joint aircraft manufacturing deal that British Aerospace (BA) has been negotiating secretly with the Soviet Union for the past year. It concerns up to 1,000 short-haul 64-passenger turboprop airliners known as ATP, for Advanced Turboprop.

The aircraft is scheduled to make its debut next year, and the Soviets have expressed intense interest in building it, too, under license. Moscow is in the market for a short-haul, fuel-efficient airliner to replace its aging fleets of AN-24s and AN-26s.

Aside from a possible deal on the new airliner, British companies — John Brown and Davy — are now in the lead for two \$1.4 billion petrochemical turnkey plants to be erected in the Soviet Union. A new trade treaty, to replace the one signed 10 years ago, is scheduled to be signed at the end of October.

British exports to the U.S.S.R., which rose 65 percent in 1984 to almost \$1 billion, are still only a quarter of West Germany's and are far below those of France and Italy. Nevertheless, these are trade stakes big enough to act as powerful deterrents against further embarrassment of the Soviet Union in the spy scandal.

The British government does, however, know who were the KGB's principal British agents and dupes.

They range from what the KGB calls an *osnovny* agent (a valuable operative who has an intimate relationship with the KGB), to *dovveryonnoe litso* (people who are totally reliable politically and will knowingly carry out Soviet instructions but have not been formally recruited), to *tyomnaya verboura* (unwitting dupes who serve Soviet interests and work under KGB control without realizing what they are doing) — the category Lenin called "useful idiots."